

Researchers examine intersectionality in cancer care

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Cancer cell during cell division. Credit: National Institutes of Health

Intersectionality posits that social categorizations and personal identities are interconnected in a way that creates a unique nuanced lived experience for individuals rather than an additive experience. For

example the experience of a queer Black woman living in a rural area is not the sum of being queer, Black, and in a rural location, as these identities are not mutually exclusive.

An analysis published in *Psycho-Oncology* examines published research on intersectionality relative to disparities in cancer care.

The analysis included 28 studies and found that the intersection of sexual minority status with race/ethnicity was associated with lower diagnostic screening, lower receipt of preventative services, and an increase in distrust of the healthcare system.

The results uncover the various ways in which patients with intersectional identities may be at higher risk for negative [cancer](#) outcomes.

"The findings in this study serve to highlight how care providers need to shift from the traditional unidimensional understanding of patients to a more holistic perspective using an 'intersectional' lens that accommodates a more multidimensional, complex, and nuanced understanding of patients and how they self-identify," said senior author Timothy M. Pawlik, MD, MPH, Ph.D., of The Ohio State University. "A greater openness and understanding of patient identity—and the intersection of various identities—is needed to effectively address inequities in [cancer care](#) and scholarship."

More information: Joseph Kelly-Brown et al, Intersectionality in cancer care: A systematic review of current research and future directions, *Psycho-Oncology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1002/pon.5890](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.5890)

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